

ANNAMACHARYA



Kamisetty Srinivasulu



TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS
Tirupati

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FORE WORD

Tallapaka Annamacharya's songs are very widely known today among the students of Telugu literature as well as the music-lovers all over India. He sang in praise of Lord Venkateswara in 32,000 compositions. His songs are full of rich poetry and music dedicated to Srinivasa.

"Annamacharya" originally written in Telugu by Sri Kamisetty Srinivasulu and published in the T. T. D. Balabharati series, was an attempt at making the story of the great saint-composer known even to the children of Andhra Pradesh. Finding that the songs of Annamacharya command great attention among the singers outside Andhra Pradesh too, we thought it proper to get the story rendered into English for the benefit of the non-Telugu speaking reading public.

We hope that this English version of 'Annamacharya' will become equally popular with the children as its original in Telugu.

TIRUPATI

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ANNAMACHARYA

Haven't you ever seen a Telugu mother feeding her little child with morsels of food and singing:

चन्दमाम रावो जाबिल्लि रावो, मन्त्रिच
कुन्दनम्पु पैडि कोर वेन्न पालु तेवो

Moon, please come here. Also bring along with you milk in a cup of gold for our little child.

Do you know who wrote this song? Tallapaka Annamacharya, an illustrious devotee of Venkateswara and a poet, composed it. He is the first 'Vaggeyakara' (singer-poet) in Telugu. Lord Venkateswara woke up with the songs of Annamacharya and slept when he sang a lullaby. Alamelu Manga too was fond of his songs. She danced joyously to the songs of Annamacharya.

Should we not know something about this great devotee?

This happened nearly six hundred years ago.



Tallapaka

Tallapaka is a village in the taluk of Rajampet in Cuddapah District. There are two temples in that Village—One for Chenna Kesava Swami and the other for Siddheswara. Lord Chennakesava is said to have been consecrated by King Janamejaya. Even now several Gods, saints and sages are believed to be worshipping this deity everyday.

Years ago a number of Brahmin families depended on this temple for their livelihood. Among them the most famous was Narayanayya's. His great grand-son was also called Narayanayya. It is with him that the story of Annamacharya begins.

As a boy Narayanayya was not interested in his studies. His father attempted all methods to make him read, but in vain. He sent him then to his relatives in a neighbouring village, Ootukooru¹. There again the teachers tried all possible ways. But they did not succeed in their attempts. In their annoyance they punished him. He was subjected to great torture. The tender heart of the little boy was severely hurt. He was insulted and humiliated. Death would be better

1. Ootukur is a hamlet very near Tallapaka.



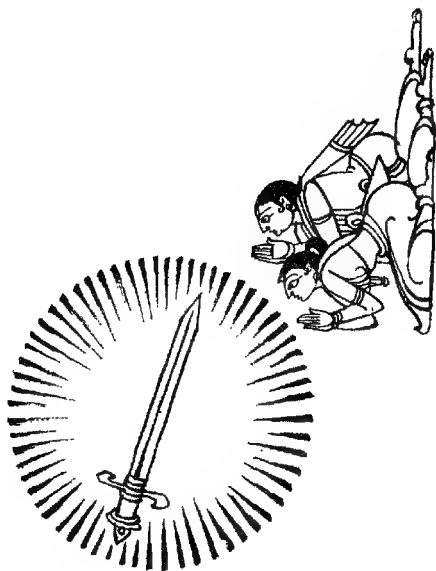
than this life of shame, he thought. He heard some one say that there was a serpent in the Chintalamma temple. Alone he went to the temple and put his hand into the serpent's hole. Suddenly Chintalamma, the goddess, appeared before him. Narayanayya was in tears. The goddess comforted him and said consolingly "Why did you do this? In your third generation a boy will be born in your house and he will bring fame to all of you. Who says you can't read? You will get everything by the grace of Chennakesava." So saying she disappeared. Accordingly Narayanayya learnt everything by the grace of Lord Chennakesava Swami.

Narayana Suri

Narayanayya had a son by name Narayana Suri. Narayana Suri was a learned man. His wife, Lakkamamba, was a devotee of Vishnu. In her native village Madupur², she could directly converse with Lord Chennakesava. Narayana Suri and Lakkamamba prayed to several gods and visited several temples as they had no children for a long time. One day they started on a pilgrimage to Tirumala.

After reaching Tirumala they went to the temple and prostrated before the Holy Mast (Dhwaja stambham) in front

2. Madupur is a village situated in the same district.



of the temple. Suddenly they felt that they were getting a little drowsy. A dazzling brilliance appeared to the couple and presented a shining sword to them. They were very happy as they returned to Tallapaka after worshipping Lord Venkateswara.

Birth of Annamayya

In course of time Lakkamamba became pregnant and delivered a boy³. He was named Annamayya because he is born by the grace of 'nandaka' the sword of V'shnu. The little boy was a source of joy for all the people around him. Every now and then he would fold his palms as in salutation to Venkatapathi. He would not touch the milk unless he heard the name of Venkateswara. Nor would he sleep until a lullaby was sung to the Lord. When his mother sang devotional songs he would nod his head as if he understood everything.

Boy hood

As a boy of five years Annamayya was gifted with intuitive perception. His teachers soon realised that they had nothing much to teach him. He would go to the temple and

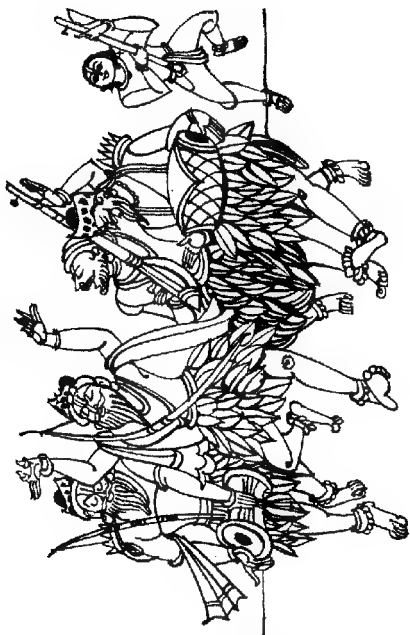
3. It was in the year 1408. The child was born in the month of 'Vaisakha' under the influence of the star 'visakha'.



address the Lord there as 'my little Kesava', Chennakesava would smile at the little boy's playfulness. He would join the little birds in their singing and play with the gentle breeze. He jumped in great joy at the sight of the lotuses floating on the water of the tank. When the village damsels sang happily on moonlit nights he made fun of them by correcting their sense of 'raga' and 'tala'. His word or song equally thrilled the entire village.

Narayana Suri was the head of a large family. There will always be minor disputes in joint families. This minute they quarrel, the next minute they get re-united. One day Annamayya was shocked to see everyone in the house raising a hue and cry at his ways. "Why do you keep singing those silly songs? Why don't you do some work at home?" they snouted. His father too was angry with him, and said, "Why don't you go to the forest and get some grass for the cattle?" Lakkamamba looked helplessly at her son. Annamayya silently went out to the forest with a sickle in his hands.

Annamayya was not used to hard work. He was soon tired. He sat under a tree and tuned his 'tampura'. He wanted to sing for a while. But the sickle by his side reminded him of



the work he had to do. As he started cutting the grass he cut his little finger. The boy was in tears. He groaned in pain. His parents and relatives came to his mind at once. 'It is all an illusion. There is no one for him now. He has nothing to do with these earthly bonds', he said to himself.

At a distance he saw a group of pilgrims going to Tirumala. They sang and danced as they walked along. Annamayya threw the sickle and joined them. There were great sages like Sanaka among the pilgrims. They were funnily dressed. Their headgear was of antelope hide and they wore dress made of leaves of trees. They had caste marks on their foreheads and carried bows in their hands. As they beat their drums and sang in great devotion they were also shouting the name of Lord 'Govinda, Govinda' every now and then. Annamayya came to Tirupati in their company.

After reaching Tirupati he first visited the temple of Gangamma⁴ and bowed before the goddess. He then reached the foot of the hill and worshipped Lord Narasimha⁵ there. The first hill is also known as 'the Hill of stars'. It is the first

4. Gangamma is a goddess worshipped largely by villagers.

5. Narasimha is the fourth incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

step to reach Venkateswara. There is a rock here called 'Taleru Gundu'⁶ where there is an idol of Anjaneya. Pilgrims going up the hill would touch this rock with their knees and head so that they would not feel any pain. Annamayya worshipped Anjaneya here. He saw the magnificent peaks of the hills stretching around. The Hill appeared as the hood of Audisesha. Audisesha is believed to have taken the form of th's mountains for Lord Venkateswara to ramble about. He started singing in great ecstasy.

अदिवो अल्लदिवो हरि वासम्
पदिवेल शेषुल पडगल मयम्

Yonder is the Hill which is the hood of Audisesha a carrier of Vishnu. That is the abode of Hari. Sages dwell there for it is there they find eternal happiness. It is replete with riches and prosperity. It is the holiest of all the holy things.

The Little Boy Tired:

Annamayya started climbing up the hill. The ascent on the first hill is called the 'great ascent'. The boy reached 'Gali

6. A Magic rock at the foot of Tirumala

gopuram⁷ and passed by the sweet smelling 'Karpura' streams enjoying the beauty of the trees and rivulets. The sun was very severe by the time Annamayya came to the 'Hill of knees'. He was a boy of only eight years. He had not undertaken such a great task before. He was both tired and hungry. He felt that he might swoon there. He stretched himself in a cool bamboo grove and slept even without taking off his footwear. The gentle breeze blowing through the bamboo flutes sang him a sweet lullaby.

Alamelu Manga Appears:

Alamelu Manga saw the boy who was tired of walking up the hill. She appeared before him and took him into her lap. Stroking him affectionately she said. "Wake up, my little son, wake up." The boy felt that his mother, Lakkamamba was calling him. But when he opened his eyes he could not see anything. He could feel her affectionate touch. He could hear her sweet words. He was worried. "Mother, I am not able to see anything," he bewailed. Alamelu Manga fondled the boy and said "My son, this Tirumala Hill is made up of the holy Salagrama rock. Remove your footwear and see." Accordingly he threw away his footwear. He could see the hill

7. The eleventh day from the full moon or new moon.



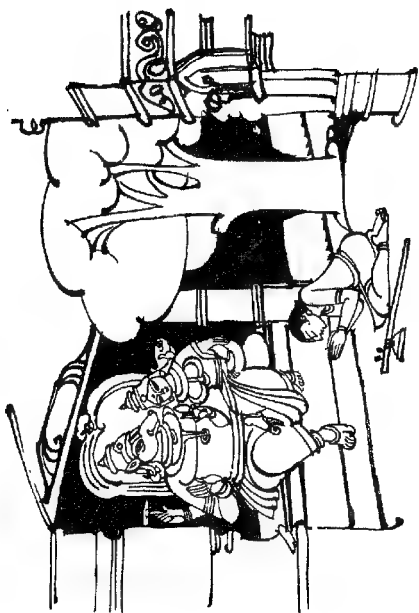
shining in great splendour. He saw in every tree a saint and in every animal a God. Gradually the many incarnations of the Lord appeared before him. He heard the chanting of the Vedas all around. He bowed to the Holy Hill in joy. Alamelu Manga gave him food to eat. He was inspired. Spontaneously he recited a hundred verses dedicated to her. He worshipped her with flower like verses. Alamelu Manga means a damsel standing on a flower.

अम्मकु ताल्लुपाक घनु डन्नडु पद्य शतम्बु सेप्ये को
कोम्मनि वाक्कुरसूनमुल कूरिमितो नलमेलुमंगकुन्
नेम्पदि नीवु चेकोनि यनेक युगम्बुलु ब्रह्मकल्पमुल्
सम्पद मन्दि वर्धिलुमु जख्बनि लीलल वेङ्कटेश्वरा

Venkateswara, May you prosper with the hundred stanzas of flower-like words recited by Tallapaka Annamacharya in praise of Alamelu Manga.

Holy Bath:

Annamayya then went to the Pushkarini, the holy pond, for a bath. This pond is also known as Swami pushkarini. It is widely said that the waters of several holy rivers merge in this pond. A dip in this pond would cleanse a man of his sins. Annamayya too had a bath in the holy pond.



The Land of Varaha:

All the pains of walking up the Hill disappeared immediately after his bath. He felt great tranquility and peace of mind. He worshipped Lord Varaha. Tirumala is known as the Land of Varaha. It was earlier under the possession of Lord Adivaraha. Venkateswara was later given permission to stay here by Varahaswami. So as a mark of gratitude it was decided that whoever goes to worship Venkateswara should first visit Varaha. Even now the first offerings are made to Lord Varaha.

Visiting the Temple:

Annamayya then went to the temple of Venkateswara. The temple tower was awe-inspiring. There was a big tamarind tree to which he bowed. He prostrated before the Holy Mast (Dhwaja Sthambham) in front of the temple. Paying homage to the Lord, he solemnly walked round 'champaka pradakshinam' which was full of tall 'Sampangi' trees with gold coloured flowers. He folded his palms to Vimana Venkateswara (the golden image of the Lord on the dome of the sanctuary) and also to Ramanuja, the Vaishnavite saint. He offered his prayers to Yoga Narasimha and Lord Janardana. He bowed before the idol of Alamelu Manga

in the temple kitchen. He visited every part of the temple. He then saw the different vahanams, vehicles of the Lord, the Horse, the Serpent Throne, the golden Garuda, all kept in a row. In a corner there were people melting carefully selected musk brought from Goa and pierced to thin bars of gold. Pilgrims, gathering in large numbers, were shouting the name of the Lord 'Govinda', repeatedly as they walked round the temple. There were parrots in cages of gold which chirped "come and worship Venkatapathi. Offer your gifts to Him and bow before Him. Your desires shall be fulfilled." He saw the room where the valuable garments of the Lord were treasured. He then offered a coin, which he carefully carried with him, to the Lord by depositing it in the temple Hundi.

The Divine Appearance:

Annamayya stood at the golden threshold. The moment he saw Venkateswara he experienced a rare joy. The magnificent idol of Srinivasa was breath-taking. He saw the Holy wheel (chakra) in one hand, the conch in the other, a ruby in the navel, a dagger hanging to his waist, anklets on his feet, one hand resting on the hip and the other promising protection, the lustrous gems in the earrings, the caste mark of pearls on the forehead, the brilliantly shining crown studded with diamonds, a lotus garland hanging on either

side of the crown, vanamala, Srivatsa, koustubha and the other invaluable jewels of the Lord. Annamayya's joy knew no bounds. Slowly his ecstasy found expression into the form of a sweet song.

पोडगण्टि मय्य मिम्मु पुरुषोत्तमा, मम्मु
 नेडयक्कवय्य कोनेटि रायडा ...
 गारविन्यि दप्पि दीर्घु काल मेघमा, माकु
 चेरुव चित्तमु लोनि श्रीनिवासुडा

Lord! You are our ancestral property, you are the dark cloud to quench our thirst, you are present in our heart of hearts. We beseech you, do not leave us any more.

The temple priests were pleased with the songs of Annamayya. They praised the boy's talent, gave him the holy water and blessed him. That day he took rest in a portico near the temple.

Visit to the Holy Ponds:

That was 'Ekadasi day'⁷ Annamayya started on a visit to all the ponds up the Hill. He saw Kumaradhara. Kumaraswami, son of Siva did penance here in order to get rid of the sin he acquired by killing a demon called Tarakasura. Annamayya then visited Amarathirtha where all the gods bathe

everyday. He saw 'Akasaganga' where Anjana went on penance for twelve years before giving birth to Anjaneya. He bathed in the holy 'papavinasanam'. In every one of these places Annamayya would take his bath and recite extempore a hundred verses in praise of the Lord even before his clothes dried up.

The Pearl Necklace:

One morning he went to the temple after his ablutions. But he was very much disappointed to see the temple doors closed. He sang in great agony. Immediately the locks fell off and the doors threw themselves open. The priests invited Annamayya into the temple. He then walked in offering his salutations to the great devotees of Hari like Garuda, Vishwakshena, Sugreeva, and Anjaneya. To the boy the Vikhanasa Nambi worshipping Venkateswara appeared as the Lord Himself in human form. He was inspired. He recited a hundred verses on the spur of the moment. Immediately a necklace of pearls which was adorning the image of the Lord fell down causing great surprise to the people there. The priests praised the little boy as one who was dear to the Lord, gave him sandal paste and the other things offered to the Lord. That night he slept in the temple of Varaha.

Dream of Ghanavishnu:

There was a Vaishnava sage called Ghana Vishnu in Tirumala during those days. He was a pious man. He preached Vaishnava philosophy to the people who went to him. On a 'Dwadasi'⁸ day Venkateswara appeared to him in his dream and said, "Tomorrow a devotee by name Annamayya will come to you. He is dark and handsome. He will always be singing songs about me. Make him a Srivaishnava by pressing the conch shell and wheel on his shoulders. Here are my signets "

Next morning Ghanavishnu waited in the temple at the 'Yagasala' after his ablutions. He had in his hands the signets of Vishnu. Annamayya came to the temple after worshipping Lord Varaha. He was singing the praise of Hari. Ghanavishnu saw the boy and approached him.

"What's your name, my boy?"

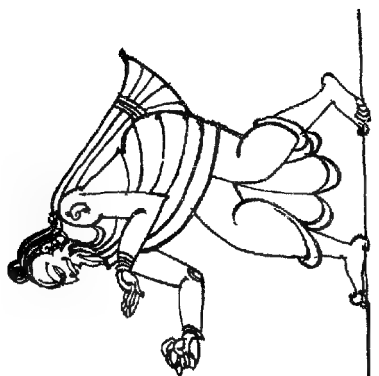
Annamayya bowed to the feet of the sage.

"Annamayya", he said.

The sage was pleased to see him.

"Shall I make the impressions of Vishnu on your shoulders?"

8. Twelfth day from new moon or full moon.



Annamayya saw Vishnu Himself in the sage.
 "I am blessed" the boy said.

Ghanavishnu then conducted the ceremony. All the Sri Vaishnavites who were there were happy to know this. Annamayya sat with them and ate in their company. Thus Annamayya became Annamacharya.

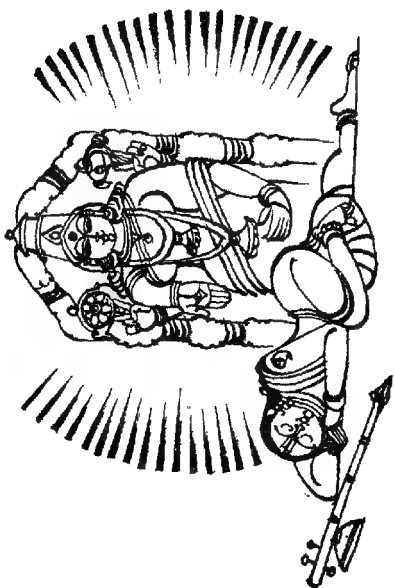
In Search of the Son:

When Annamayya left for Tirumala he had not informed any one in the village. His parents in Tallapaka were very much depressed as they could not trace their child. Lakkamamba would not come out of the Temple of Chennakesava. Narayanayya almost became insane.

On the 'Dwadasi' day the villagers performed special Pooja' in the temple for the sake of Annamayya. Lakkamamba swooned even as she was singing. Narayanayya heard his wife mutter in a state of unconsciousness, 'the Lord of the Hills, the Lord of the Hills', Narayanayya then started on a journey to Tirumala with his wife.

Treasure Found Again:

Annamacharya was learning several things from Ghanavishnu. The sage treated him affectionately and preached



Vaishnavism to him. On the day Narayanayya reached Tirumala Annamacharya was singing in a portico in front of the temple. Hundreds of devotees were listening to his songs in great devotion. Narayanasuri and Lakkamamba recognised the voice of their son even from a distance. Their joy knew no limits. Lakkamamba ran to her son calling him 'Anna'. Annamacharya could no longer sing. His father proudly embraced the boy. He perceived the change that had come over him. "Lord, this boy is the gift of your grace. You should protect him yourself", he thought. Then Ghana Vishnu took them all to his residence.

Lord's order:

That night Lakkamamba begged Annamacharya to go back to Tallapaka with them. "Mother, I love this place. How can I leave my Lord and go away? Please let me alone," he pleaded. His mother would not leave him. He could neither displease his mother nor leave his Venkateswara. When he slept afterwards that night he saw a hallow in his dream which said, "Anna, don't hurt your mother. Go back to Tallapaka. Do not think of earthly pleasures. Attain spirituality." Annamacharya understood that this was Lord's order. He agreed to go to his village with his parents.

House holder:

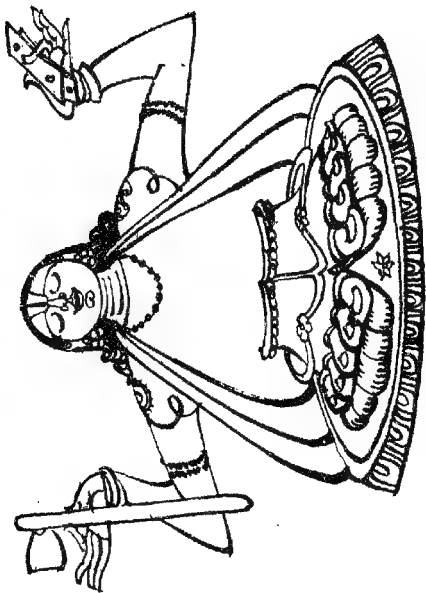
When Annamacharya attained the age of sixteen his parents wanted him to get married. But no father was ready to give his daughter in marriage to him for he was always engrossed in singing. It was a different world in which he lived. He would reach home very late after visiting all the temples. Sometimes he would not go home for a few days at all. But in very strange circumstances, perhaps because God willed it so, Annamayya happened to marry two young girls by name Timmakka and Akkamma. Even then he did not give up his service to his God.

A few days passed by. In the year 1424 Annamacharya went again to Tirumala on his birthday. It was in the month of 'Visakha'. After worshipping Venkateswara he took rest in the portico adjacent to the temple of Varaha in the night. He could not sleep for a long time. He tuned his 'tampura' and began to sing. His heart was filled with a rare joy. At once a beautiful song came out of Annamacharya's voice.

ब्रह्म कडिगिन पादमु ब्रह्ममु ताने नी पादमु

तिरुवेङ्कटगिरि तिरमनि चूपिनि परमपदमु नी पादमु

This is the foot that has been washed by Brahma, the creator of the world. Vishnu measured the earth and



the sky with this foot. Bali was pressed into 'Patala', and Indra was offered protection by this foot. It cleansed Ahalya of her sin and tamed Kalinga, the snake. Sages seek beatitude at this foot which shows that Tirumala alone is eternal.

That was a song about the divine feet of the Lord. Those were the feet that were washed by Brahma. It is with these feet that Vishnu pushed Bali into 'Patala', the nether world, and cleansed Ahalya of her sins. Annamacharya sang again and again this song describing the heavenly qualities of Lord's feet.

A Composition a Day:

Venkateswara appeared before his devotee who was immersed in divine contemplation. Annamacharya fell at the feet of the Lord. 'Acharya', you are a blessed man. Today 'sankirtana' is born in your voice. You are the father of blank verse. I should hear a new composition everyday from you. I shall not hear the compositions of anyone else." so saying Venkateswara disappeared.

Accordingly Annamacharya composed a song everyday as he wandered from place to place. He visited every temple

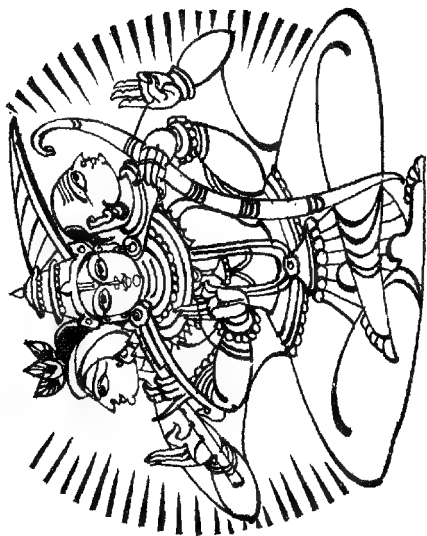
and sang about the god there. People who listened to his songs were thrilled with the beautiful use of the Telugu diom and the divine philosophy contained in those songs.

Sage Sathagopa:

During his wanderings Annamacharya heard about Sathagopa Yati. He was a very pious man. Lord Narasimha at Ahobilam was believed to have appeared in the form of a sage and blessed him to be an ascetic. Annamacharya wanted to visit this saint. So he went to Ahobilam. On the way to Ahobilam he worshipped Chokkanatha at Nandalur, Sri Rama at Ontimitta and Venkateswara at Cuddapah. He sang in praise of them.

Visit to Ahobilam:

Ahobilam is an mportant Vaishnava centre. Ages ago when Hiranyakasipa ruled over this land he tortured Prahlada, his son. In order to protect Prahlada, a devotee of Hari. Vishnu appeared as Narasimha in a very angry mood. On the bank of Bhavanasini Narasimha dwells in nine images. This place is situated in Nallamata forests. It is famous for lions and tigers. But Annamacharya walked through this forest without any fear. He first visited lower Ahobi am and worshipped Prahlada Varada. He also went to upper



Ahobilam and worshipped Narasimha in a small cave. He sang several compositions there.

Serving Sathagopa Yati:

On the banks of the river Bhavanasini Sathagopa Yati was seated like the incarnation of Lord Narasimha. Annamacharya fell at his feet and with tears in his eyes he emotionally sang in praise of him. He then underwent training for twelve years and learnt Vaishnavite rites from him. He understood Vaishnavism as follows: 'Vishnu is love. Every being can attain oneness with him irrespective of differences in caste, creed or colour. Vishnu can be pleased only through absolute surrender.' Annamacharya was very much impressed by the preaching of Sathagopa Yati. He in his turn tried to propagate this philosophy through his songs.

तन्दनान आहि तन्दनान पुरे तन्दनान भला तन्दनान

ब्रह्म मोकटे परब्रह्म मोकटे, पर ब्रह्म मोकटे परब्रह्म मोकटे

Brahman is one for all. Sri Hari does not differentiate the big from the small. The slumber of the king is the same as that of the servant. The Brahmin and the outcast tread on the same earth. The sun shines alike on an elephant or a dog. Similarly devotion to Venkateswara protects the pious and the sinner alike.

Acquiring Fame:

Annamacharya was an enlightened man. His god and guru were both kind to him. His aim was to spread the philosophy of Vaishnavism through his sweet songs for the well being of mankind. His songs became popular in a short time. Salva Narasinga Raya, the ruler of Tangutur,⁹ heard of Annamacharya and his songs. He went to Tallapaka carrying many valuable presents for him.

Guru to Narasinga Raya:

Salva Narasinga Raya was a great warrior. 'Salva' was a title awarded to him. He accepted Annamacharya as his 'guru'. He would not undertake any work without consulting Annamacharya. It was with the blessings of Annamacharya that Narasinga Raya later became the king of Penugonda. He invited Annamacharya to Penugonda, honoured him suitably and requested him to stay there in his kingdom forever. He offered him all facilities. Annamacharya agreed to stay there because it was easier to carry on his divine duty of spreading Visishtadwaita philosophy with the royal assistance.

9. A small village in Rajampet Taluk.

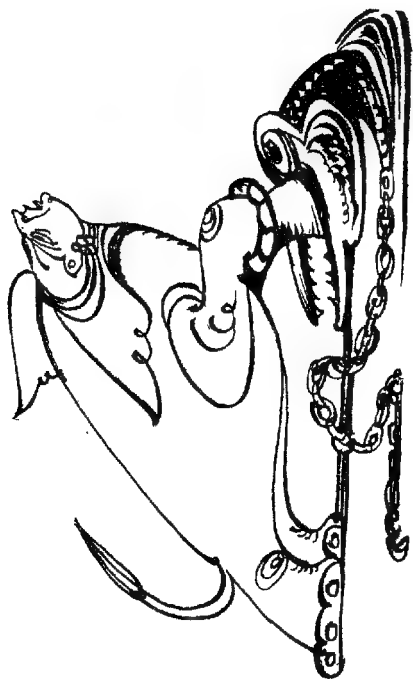
Annamacharya imprisoned:

One day the king invited him to his court. There were his ministers, princes, generals and members of the royal family. Narasingaraya requested Annamacharya to sing a song in the court. Annamacharya readily consented.

एमोको चिगुरुटधरमुन येडनेड कस्तुरि निण्डेनु
भाषिनि विभुनकु ब्रासिन पत्रिक कादु गदा
.....

The wide eyes of Alamelu Manga are red probably because of the drops of blood sticking to them when her sharp spearlike looks have been plucked out of her Lord.

Everyone in the court was mightily pleased to hear that song. After honouring him the king begged Annamacharya, "Sir, won't you compose a song on me?" Annamacharya could not bear to hear these words. He got up from his chair saying, "How can I praise anyone with this tongue which should be employed in praising the Lord of the Universe? I can not stay here any longer. Let me go." He left the court immediately. The king felt insulted in the presence of his subordinates. He summoned his soldiers and ordered them to imprison Annamacharya. Annamacharya was then thrown



in the jail. He was not perturbed by the ill-treatment meted out to him. He appealed only to the mercy of Venkateswara in a pathetic song.

नी दासुल भंगमु नीबु चूतुवा

.....

ये रीति पराकु नीकु निक रक्षिच रावा

Lord, how do you tolerate the insults hurled at your worshippers? How could you sleep when we pray for you help. Did you not hear the cry of Droupadi when you were playing dice in "Dwaraka"? Had not the lamentation of Gajendra, the elephant king reached you when you were with your consort in "Vaikunta"? Why do you then ignore my prayer and not come to my rescue now?

The moment Annamacharya completed his song his fetters broke and fell down. The servants conveyed this news to the king. Narasingaraya came to that place and ordered haughtily, "I don't trust this, put him in fetters once again and more carefully." Annamacharya laughed at the ignorance of the king. He sang another song on Venkatapathi. In the presence of the king the chains once again broke. Narasingaraya then realised the wrong he had done to

Annamacharya. He fell at his feet and begged him to excuse him. Annamacharya said, "Raja, don't ever hurt the devotees of Hari. Insulting a pious man is more sinful than insulting God Himself. The Lord will be pleased only through singing. Be benevolent and protect virtue." He then left for Tirumala.

Communal Quarrels:

During the fifteenth century Andhra was very much disturbed with communal fights. Muslims attacked the Hindu temples. They slaughtered cows and molested women. At a time like this Annamacharya was going on a journey to Tirumala. He broke his journey on the way at the temple of Anjaneya. Just then some muslim soldiers came on horse-back and knocked down the temple. They threatened the pilgrims who were gathered there and robbed them of their belongings. Annamacharya was shocked. He could not save the only possession of his, the image of Venkateswara. The walls of the temple were brought down to the earth. There were several helpless victims like him around. The tall idol of Anjaneya was there in front of him. Annamacharya could not contain his sorrow. He sang very pathetically appealing to the help of Anjaneya.



इन्दिरा रमणु तेत्वि विध्यरो माकिटुवले
पोन्दि यीतनि पूजिंच पोद्दाय निपुडु

Annamayya here appeals to the different servants of vishnu like Anjaneya, Garuda, Adisesha and Kartaviry-arjuna to help him get back the image of Venkateswara.

Sankat Mochan:

The muslim soldiers who plundered the pilgrims reached their tents and were happily enjoying themselves. Anjaneya entered their tent in the form of a monkey, took away the bag in which Annamacharya kept the image of Venkateswara, and then crushed down the tent. Annamacharya who was in a state of unconsciousness felt as if some one woke him up. When he opened his eyes he was extremely happy to see once again the image of Venkateswara which he every day worshipped in front of him.

Annamacharya then reached Tirumala. His desire was to spend the rest of his life in the temple of the Lord. He would participate in the temple festivals and sing several of his compositions. He wrote a poem in riming couplet called 'Srīngara Manjari'. He composed a few romantic songs

depicting Divine Love. Srin vasa used to hear those songs as Annamacharya was singing.

Young Again:

One day Venkateswara heard a love song sung by Annamacharya and said, "Añña, when I hear these songs of love I feel young again." Annamacharya was pleasantly surprised. He stood before the smiling Srinivasa and said, "My Lord, you are the creator. The Vedas praise you and the sages worship you. I am after all a puppet in your hands. You brought me up and taught me to sing. I am only a servant of your's".

A Grave fault:

Annamacharya was a great devotee of Hari. His heart was pure and his mind was filled with a desire to help the humanity. Whatever is said by such devotees always comes true. One day he offered some mangoes to the Lord. When he tasted the fruit afterwards he found that they were sour. He was pained to know that the mangoes offered by him to his Lord were not sweet. He thought he committed a serious fault in his service to God. He then touched that tree and prayed that it should yield only sweet mangoes thereafter. At once all the fruits of that tree turned sweet.

On another occasion a poor brahmin approached Annamacharya for monetary help. Owing to Annamacharya's blessings a king invited that brahmin and presented him several valuable things. Annamacharya's songs were not mere songs, they had great miraculous powers in them. They would cure diseases which were considered to be incurable and keep away evil spirits.

Annamacharya – Purandara Das:

Having heard about the miracles of Annamacharya, Purandara Das came to Tirumala to see him. Purandara Das was famous by then as a great musician in Karnataka. When he went to see him Annamacharya was sitting with the 'tampura' in his hand and was singing a devotional song. The listeners were repeating the song after him with great devotional fervour.

शरणु शरणु सुरेन्द्र सन्नुत शरणु श्रीसति वल्लभा
शरणु राक्षस गर्व संहर शरणु वेङ्कट नायका

Venkatanayaka, you are being worshipped by the deities like Brahma, the Sun and the Moon. Saints, sages, angels and the other heavenly beings wait upon you. May I seek your protection.

After some time Annamacharya saw a young man singing with the people there and gestured to him to go near him. Purandara Das went to him and said, "Swami, I have heard of your miracles and now I have heard your songs too. These are not songs but sacred hymns to save my soul. You are not an ordinary man. You are the very incarnation of Venkateswara." Annamacharya was quite old by then. He embraced Purandara and blessed him then — "You are not ordinary. You are a blessed child of Lord Vittale. Lord himself fetched water to you 'Sondhyavadanam', Your songs are going to be the primary lessons of carnatic music".

Other compositions:

Many of the compositions of Annamacharya were lost in course of time. They were all recorded on copper plates and preserved in the 'Sankirtana Treasury' of the temple at Tirumala. But, owing to the inattention and ignorance of our people a few thousands of these plates were melted. Out of the 32,000 compositions of Annamacharya we have today 12,000 left with us. He wrote twelve 'satakas', but only one remains. We have also lost his other works like 'Dwipada Ramayana' 'Venkatachala Mahatmyam', 'Sankirtana Lakshanam' and a few other works written in the other languages.

Service of the Tallapaka Poets:

Annamayya son, Peda Tirumalaiah, and his grand sons, China Tirumalaiah and Chinnanna were great singers as well as poets. They are together called as the Tallapaka poets. Their service to the Telugu language is enormous. They wrote in different styles and forms. Annamacharya's first wife Timmakka was the first and foremost poetess in Telugu literature. Her son Narasinganna was a great poet. Apart from writing books the Tallapaka poets constructed temples. They renovated old ones. They introduced many festivals like 'Kalyanotsavam' in the temple of Tirumala. About sixty inscriptions describing the services of the Tallapaka poets are preserved still in the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

Last Days:

Annamacharya passed away in the year 1503. It was Bahula Dwadasi in the Phaiguna month of Dundubhi. Annamacharya was 95 years old then. He called Peda Tirumalaiah and said in private 'Timmappa, my life has reached its end. It is your duty hereafter to carry on my mission of singing a new composition every day for Lord Srinivasa.' He handed over his 'tampura' to his son. Tears tickled down the eyes of Peda Tirumalaiah. Stroking the head,

of his son Annamacharya muttered something, probably that was 'Venkateswara Mantra'. Peda Tirumalaiah could see before his mind's eye a bright hallow emerging from the body of his father and getting absorbed in the image of Lord Venkateswara.

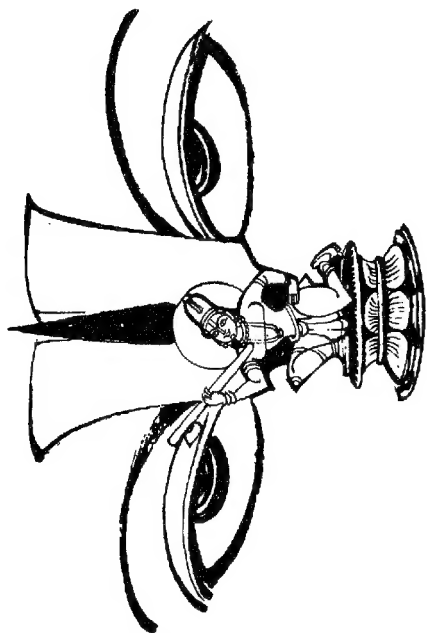
Thereafter on every Bahula Dwadasi day Peda Tirumalaiah used to sing as follows:

दिनम् द्वादशि तीर्थ दिवसम् नीकु
जनकुड अन्नमाचार्युड विच्चेयवे

Annamacharya, my parent, today is dwadasi, the day of your death anniversary. Come and accept my offerings in the company of great devotees and scholars. Come to my house with Lord Venkateswara and His consort Padmavathi, to have our hospitality.

China Tirumalayya, used to worship his grand father Annamacharya everyday.

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